conservatism, especially when liberalism appears to be on the defensive in the United States. On the other hand, Fass's study represents a consensus approach to history, which accounts for resistance but somewhat diminishes it, and discounts struggle, ignoring conflict altogether. With the yet unresolved problems of inequality plaguing African-Americans and women, and the reactionary responses to the ever-increasing numbers of Latino immigrants, does liberalism work? Does consensus history truly reflect the experiences of these groups in our political economy?

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Kathleen E. McCrone. *Playing the Game: Sport and the Physical Emancipation of English Women, 1870-1914.* Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1988. Pp. 310.

As Kathleen McCrone points out, the great eighteenth-century feminist Mary Wollstonecraft knew that the "liberation of women's bodies" was essential to the wider emancipation of women. That there is a connection between that emancipation and the emergence of women's right to participate in sport is the thesis of her meticulously researched study.

Playing the Game provides a full account of the development of women's sport at the Oxbridge women's colleges and at secondary schools for middle-class girls. While it covers some of the same ground as the work of other scholars (for example, that of Sheila Fletcher), McCrone provides a new dimension because her study goes beyond an examination of the influence of sport on the education of girls and young women to include the involvement of adult women in individual and team sports, and the discussion of the connection between the rise of women's sport and dress reform. In all of these areas, *Playing the Game* provides the reader with a wealth of information.

McCrone's discussion of the development of physical education in girls' schools and of the rise of training schools for physical-training mistresses is of special importance from the point of view of the history of education. On this subject, she offers some interesting and unexpected conclusions. She points out that whereas in boys' schools sport was not usually perceived as part of what she calls "a wider system of physical education" (p. 101), in progressive girls' schools it was. Thus, the rise of physical education as a profession devoted to the training and development of the body owes more to educators of girls than of boys. The history of the physical training institutes is also important to the story of the development of professions for women. Being a physical-training mistress was one such new occupation. As McCrone puts it: "The rise of the physical education mistress and institutions to train her represented the concession to women of a right to a degree of body

control and to a respectable, well-paying career" (p. 121).

McCrone makes it clear in her introduction and throughout *Playing the Game* that she is concerned only with sport and the emancipation of the body as it affected middle and upper-class girls and women, and the treatment of that subject was clearly enough for one book. However, for this reviewer, the material in *Playing the Game* does raise some important questions concerning the importance of social class, questions McCrone might have considered. For example, we know from research done by historians like Laura Oren, Jane Lewis, Elizabeth Roberts, and Ellen Ross that working-class girls and women in the Victorian and Edwardian years suffered from physical debilitation that was even more serious than that of working-class men. McCrone provides a thorough analysis of the way in which the athletic woman challenged the dominant bourgeois Victorian sterotype of femininity, with its image of the ideal woman as fragile and passive. But the alteration of this class-based stereotype and the consequent recognition that ladies could be robust and vigorous may well have widened the gap between the experience of working-class women and those of the middle and upper classes. The fact that possibilities for liberating the female body applied only to a minority of privileged women in McCrone's period could have played a more central role in *Playing the Game*.

In McCrone's well-argued concluding chapter, she explores the connections between the feminist movement and women's sport that emerge from her study. As she points out, they were indirect, in that few women involved in sport were active feminists, but they were nonetheless important. First, widening opportunities in sport were often a consequence of women's agitation in other areas, and second, sport contributed in its turn to "emancipating females from physical and psychological bondage and to altering the image of ideal womanhood" (pp. 276-7). And paradoxically, she notes, even though most sportswomen shied away from active feminist involvement, the athletic "mannish" woman was a favourite target of antifeminists.

In conclusion then, *Playing the Game*, with its careful research and its breadth of information, makes a valuable contribution to the history of middle-class women. The book will be of importance to historians of feminism and of women's education, and as well, to those interested in the history of sport, and in sport itself.

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Theresa R. Richardson. *The Century of the Child: The Mental Hygiene Movement and Social Policy in the United States and Canada.* Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1989. Pp. xii, 273. $49.50 cloth, $16.95 paper.

Theresa Richardson's wide-ranging, but richly documented, historical study of the mental hygiene movement